

Senate Bill 112  
March 8, 2011  
Presented by Joe Maurier  
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Joe Maurier, Director of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here to provide information on Senate Bill 112.

A quick survey done earlier this year with other states showed that 17 states who responded prohibit spears or other hand-thrown projectiles for big game hunting. These include Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and North Dakota. There are states, however, that do allow the taking of non-game species and some birds by spear and only Missouri had a specific atlatl season for big game.

There are other bills currently under consideration by the Legislature that address issues that are relevant to this bill. HB173 and SB135 both deal with issues and concerns regarding tracking wounded game. Currently, little, if any information exists on the percentage of animals wounded and lost when taken by hand-propelled projectiles. We would anticipate, however, that the wounding of big game animals would be considerably higher as compared to those taken by archery equipment and firearms.

We would expect limited interest and participation in the sport of hand-thrown projectiles such as spears and atlatls.

We believe that this is a social issue that points to issues of hunter ethics and behavior; in short, the standards Montanans hold for the hunt. FWP expects that the impact on the big game resources of the state, were this to be passed, would be negligible. By the same token, it raises issues of hunting ethics as well as what Montana hunters feel are appropriate means of taking. Thank you.